Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we are all very pleased to hear Miss Blogg this morning. We are constantly getting letters from mothers and others saying that she has quite won them over to our side by her nice letters.

MISS MASON: I take very great pleasure in echoing Mrs. Steinthal's words about Miss Blogg and her work for the Union, but I should also like to say that a very important part of our work has not received any mention, and that is the work connected with "Aunt Mai's Budget." The portfolio and the various sewing, cooking and gardening clubs are the great delights of children in many homes. I have known children who seize on the *Parents' Review* before the parents get a chance, so keen are they to see what "Aunt Mai" has to say to them from month to month. Her letters, which are incredibly numerous, are the treasured possessions of many young correspondents. I was congratulating a student of the House of Education on the advance her little pupil had made; her reply was, "Yes, I do think D. has improved wonderfully, but I think it is far more due to the influence of the Union generally, and above all to 'Aunt Mai,' than it is to me." Indeed, I think that "Aunt Mai's" work is at the very heart of the Union.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much; this is very unexpected but very satisfactory. I think the greatest compliment I have ever had in my life, I received last night. Some time ago a little girl brought her doll to me because she behaved so badly; she wanted to see if I could do anything with her. I explained that as she had only one leg she could not expect perfection, and the little girl seemed comforted with the explanation. She sent me a letter last night about the doll; the governess thought it was great nonsense, but the little girl said, "No, Aunt Mai understands dolls and knows a great deal about them, she knows a great deal more than you do." I think that is the greatest compliment I ever had in my life.

I think this conference has been a very great delight to all of us, and we ought to give a hearty clap for the members of the committee who arranged it, Mrs. Franklin, Mrs. Anson, Mr. Perrin and Miss Helen Webb.

FRIDAY, *May 28th*, at 6 p.m.

SHORT SERVICE

AND ADDRESS BY REV. CANON SCOTT HOLLAND,

AT ST. JAMES' CHURCH, PICCADILLY, W.

After a short and very appropriate service, Rev. Canon Scott Holland preached from St. Matthew xxi. 12—16.

The children cried "Hosannah" on that great day when the Lord went up into His Temple. That going up was the symbol of the great Ascension into His glory. He passed up to His Temple. When all was cast out—the tumult of the cattle, the degradation of the money-changing, all the Mammon-spirit—it ceased for a brief moment to be a den of thieves, through the great power of the Name of Him who came and stood there. He has driven out with the whip of small cords all that offends. Who is there who still could remain? Who is there who could abide the day of His coming, and stand when He appeareth?

So noticeable it is who was there. There were two sets of people who were at home in the Temple of the Lord. They would remain. Who were they? They were two types of hearts that recognised the Lord.

First, the sufferers: those who had to be healed, the blind and the lame, they were there. "Come unto me, all ye that labour," and these had come and were not afraid. No whip of small cords for them. The Temple is the right place for them. They came out of their holes and corners, and up the great Temple steps, leaving behind all the bitter memories, bringing their sick and weary hearts to Him who alone could understand. The sick came. Their defilements were no defilements in the house of the Lord. They knew their day; they felt what was going forward.

And the children. Hosannahs burst from them almost unawares. They are not ashamed or afraid. They understood and felt, and perceived and apprehended. Their elders are scowling them down. "What's this noise? What's it about? Lord, rebuke this." He must have the children on the one day of His triumph. The one brief hour of triumph He must have, though it risk His life; the palms waving,

the clothes laid down, though it bring down the final wrath, though it send Him to the cross, yet He *would* have it, all the noise and joy of the great triumph. Out from their hearts it came, and He would have it. "I desire it so, that if these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out; so did I hunger for it." And now here it is, out of the children's lips. So He had it, the day of His triumph.

Now at Ascensiontide, when we are all trying to lift up our hearts out of the perplexities of life, let us remember how our Lord sought His hosannahs. Let him have them from us, out of the child-heart within us.

It is a good thing for us all to remember, to relieve us of the strain of over-anxiety, that God has the children. You set yourselves to study them. You feel that these lives in your hands are so precious, no pains can be too great. And you will meet and confer, more and more seriously, every year. You know how deep are the obligations laid upon you. You know that it is no light charge. It will cost you all you can give it of brain and heart and will. It will make great demands upon you; *nobody can say that too strongly.* Just that we may lift our heads and hearts, we will remember God has the children in His care. *They*, after all, will find their way to Him; *they* will have the instincts; *they* will find Him. He will be understood by those who have child-hearts. We shall go on plodding, learning, studying, and one day we shall find that somehow or other the child has gone past us all: *out* goes his heart, drawn by the great voice of God that it hears.

Out of their own mouths, straight away out of the children themselves. That is a lesson that we have to learn over all the field of life. We must take all the pains in the world, repeat, observe and note, and then find that we have done nothing at all. God takes it up. *Always* we are to go on trying to do what we never can do. Yet, *because we have tried*, it all comes. It could not unless. We learnt it from the great Baptist. He stood in the midst of the people, there by the Jordan, and made them know that they must sorrow and repent and forsake their sin, and yet come up out of the water and know that they have done nothing at all. They have simply to wait and He will do it all. So with you. *Only* by the pains you have taken with your child

you have given Him entry. You must take all the pains and all the trouble, and then you must hand it all over to God and lay it in His hands. He will do that which you will never do, in ways that will surprise you. Enough for you to know that your pains, your trouble, have set the child free. You can give it a chance of leading its own life. You will fall back and watch. It will have its own growth. You will always be watching on at something that you never moulded. *You* will be content if you have set it free, if you have taken away all that might obstruct. Your reward is that it moves so freely, trusting the great instincts which are God's voice inside it. You will be standing aside, prepared to get out of the way. It is but lost labour that you rise up early and eat the bread of carefulness, if you think that is going to do it all. But *not lost labour*, *not lost labour*, if, after all, you hand it over to Him who knows His own children; not lost, because you hand it over.

So with religion. If only you can set free the child that it may feel after God in its own way; if only you can set it free from what holds back the call of God and let it ask its own questions, you have done your part, you have your reward. Trust it with God; He will help it, not only through you. He calls the child that it may know Him from inside its own heart. *You* can lay about it all that is precious and fair—God is its own God. The child will find Him moving up in triumph through the earth, the God of health, the God of release, the God of joy, of singing, of Hosannahs, of waving palms. It will learn to find its God, bright, glorious, strong in its childhood, unashamed and unafraid. Then, perhaps, when it joins that other band, the band of sufferers, maimed in life, blind and halt—*then*, because it had learnt to know God before, it will turn to Him then, and will be found still in His temple for the wounds and the weariness of its sick heart. Above all, kneel down and leave the whole life with Him who cares for it, and treasures it more tenderly than you can, and knows more what its growth should be. He will bring it to that eternal home cleansed of all uncleanness, where, please God, by the mercy of Christ, we may one day be found.